

P
971.3
03 R59

'GLOBE," DECEMBER 21, 1904

Only condition upon which Mr. Ross will lead

CHALLENGE TO THE TORIES

Rousing Demonstration held at Napanee

DECEMBER 20th, 1904.

He Speaks of the Work Done in Opening Up the Northland and in Giving Aid to the Steel and Iron Industry—The Policy of Obstruction Under Mr. Whitney's Leadership Contrasted with the Progressive Spirit of the Liberals—The Old War Horse a Winner Yet.

Napanee, Dec. 20.—A magnificent record of business administration compared with Conservative inaction and stupid obstruction is what Premier Ross laid before the electors in opening the Provincial campaign to-night. The contrast was applied with all of Mr. Ross' old-time vigor, with special reference to the great work of building up Ontario, which now more than ever lies at the door of whatever Government may be in power. The ringing periods of his opening speech, his frequent dashes of humor and ironical thrusts at his opponents, his masterly and impartial review of the attitude of the two parties respecting corruption, and his optimistic views of the great future of this Province, were in the Premier's best style, and his steady maintenance of vigor during a two hours' address should give hope to every Liberal for a brilliant and active campaign. The meeting, which was in the interests of Mr. M. S. Madole, Liberal candidate in Lennox, was large enough to crowd the Opera House in

spite of a heavy snowstorm. The audience sat, with the closest attention, intact to the last, and frequently manifested their approval by loud cheers. The Premier's speech was marked by the introduction of considerable new material. In beginning he boldly challenged criticism of his position and record, and then spoke of the great necessity of building up Ontario, with special reference to the industries at Sault Ste. Marie, which the Government had been instrumental in restoring. Mr. Whitney's unprogressive record in the House was put under the searchlight, and then the Premier discussed frankly the two records in regard to corruption. He expressed his greatest sorrow for the acts of certain Liberals, but pointed out that he should not be responsible for the acts of every one of the 225,000 voting Liberals in Ontario, any more than Rev. Dr. Carman could for every Methodist who went to the theatre or played cards. "It is grossly, cruelly untrue and false that I have any guilty knowledge of these corrupt practices," Mr. Ross declared with all the energy and emphasis that he could command. The Conservative platform, as adopted at the conference, was scathingly criticized, and shown to be largely stolen, and of their temperance plank it was said: "It is as colorless as a white ray of light, and not so pure." The meeting was most satisfactory from a Liberal standpoint, and gives every promise that Mr. Madole will this time win and hold the honors of which he was unjustly deprived in 1902.

The Premier's Speech.

Hon. Geo. W. Ross was enthusiastically cheered when he stepped forward to reply to the address. His opening words were expressive of thanks to the little lady who had so gracefully presented him with a bouquet. Next he thanked the Chairman for the very flattering address which he had presented to him. "It does," said Mr. Ross amid cheers, "somewhat sweeten the—what shall I say!—the torture, or it allays the torture of public life a little now and again to have pleasant things said about you. References have been made to the many fierce attacks that have been made upon me. I do not worry much about that. It is part of the game. Every leader has to submit to it whether he likes it or not. Away back before my recollection, and as you call me a 'grand old man' I ought to go back a good while, it was the case with other leaders of the Liberal party; with Hon. Alex. Mackenzie, than whom there was no more honest or straightforward man in public life; with Edward Blake, one of the brightest stars in the Canadian firmament; with my predecessors, Sir Oliver Mowat, and Mr. Hardy, so that 'what can't be cured must be endured'—(laughter)—and that with the greatest equanimity."

A Cheering Prospect.

Mr. Ross expressed himself delighted with Mr. Madole, who would make a worthy member of the Legislative Assembly. He had known

the Legislative Assembly since 1884; he had seen some men come and go, and he had seen some men stay that he would have liked to see go. (Laughter.) Very few men have come, and not many have gone whose presence in the Legislative Assembly would give him more pleasure. He commended Mr. Madole for the independence of thought of which he had given evidence, and for the clear-cut enunciation of his views, with which in the main he agreed. As Liberals they gave their members considerable latitude. It was the glory of the Liberal party that it has given freedom of speech to everybody, in Parliament and out of it. It was the glory of the Liberal party that it has been the fertile soil of all those great progressive measures in Church and State which have made Canada, which have made England, free and which make us proud of being British subjects.

The Second Campaign.

Reference has been made, said Mr. Ross, that I am here to-night to make the opening speech of the campaign. Well, it is my second campaign; I opened the last campaign in 1902. I did not expect then that the second would come on so soon; I did not want it to come on so soon; but, latterly, I thought that the second campaign should be opened. Our opponents thought that we were going to hold the bye-elections. We trust the people—the whole people. We have been scandalized—I use the term in its kindest sense—hard things have been said against us. It is said we have lost the public confidence. On the 25th of January we shall know whether we have the confidence of the people or not, and so far as I am concerned, we shall not know it any too soon. I do not want to stand as the leader of a party that is staggering under a weak majority, or that under any pretence whatever rules or governs or legislates for the people of Ontario. A Liberal leader that is true to the tradition of his party wants to have the whole people—wants to have a substantial majority of the people—at his back, that he may rule with firmness and strength, and with a resolute will. We have not faltered or staggered under our comparatively weak majority. Still, it goes without saying that the position of the Government would be better if the majority were increased. We expect that to be the result of this campaign. We expect, when we meet the enemy face to face, that we shall be able to show him that his charges are unfounded, that our reputation is unsullied, that the administration of public affairs has been in the public interest, and that no Ministry nor member of the Liberal ranks has benefited himself by one dollar because of his position. (Cheers.)

Political Hallucination.

Mr. Ross went on to say that he had been somewhat puzzled as to what he should talk about to-night. The field was an extensive one, but he had come to the conclusion he would take what might be called the political gossip of the Opposition—it was gossip; it was political

hallucination. That was what they presented to the people in the absence of a policy. One thing they said, Mr. Ross proceeded, is that we have been in power a long time. They felt it has been a long time—(laughter)—a very long time, and they say it is not good for one party to be in power so long a time. Well, now, that depends altogether. If the administration has been sound all this time; if, as Mr. Madole has said, we have spent the money honestly, wisely, and economically, on that score then, there can be no fault if we remain in power for four years longer. If any of you have a foreman, or if the town has a mayor, or if you have a teacher or preacher whose services are such as you require, or a corporation that administers its affairs with prudence and in the interests of its shareholders, because it has existed a long time, you don't think it should be changed. That is no reason. Before there is a well-founded reason for demanding a change there must be proof that the Administration is incapable, or that the Ministers are incompetent, or that the public interests were suffering by their administration.

A Pretty Good Horse.

One of the Toronto papers, Mr. Ross went on, printed regularly a cartoon of a war horse that had been 32 years in the saddle. Well, suppose he has. He is as good a war horse now as when the saddle was first put on him. (Laughter.) It is a horse that has never lost a Derby race yet. It has always been a winner. (Applause and laughter.) Now and again, in a side steeplechase or hurdle race or something of that kind, it may sometimes have had a tumble; but in the great races of the season the war horse has always won, and it is going to win this time. (Loud applause and cries of "You bet!") But the other horse has been in the saddle 32 years also. The Opposition horse has been on the race course for 32 years and has never won a race yet. (Laughter.) I do not know that he is likely to for some time. He has had many jockeys. (Renewed laughter.) There was Sir Matthew Crooks Cameron for two years, and he lost. Sir William Ralph Meredith, an estimable man, ran him for twenty years, and gave up the job to take one on the Bench, which he adorns. Then Mr. Marter ran him for a year and a half. There was too much prohibition in that jockey, or something—(laughter)—and he was retired. He did not retire: he was retired, and for the last seven years my esteemed friend Mr. Whitney has been running that horse without any better success. He came within two or three points of winning last time, but it was so near and yet so far—(applause and laughter)—and he has now called to his assistance in the grooming of that horse a list of men such as Mr. Gamey, Dr. Beatty Nesbitt, etc. (Cries of "Oh!" and groans.) In fact, he has a lot of grooms, and the other day he called a conference to see if there was any chance for this 32-year-old animal to win, and they came to the conclusion that the horse might win. They have always been saying that. They have lost money on that every time. (Long continued laughter and applause.)

A Weak Opposition.

The fact that we have been 32 years in power is no reason for a change, though it may naturally be a reason for some Ministers changing. If you are going to change—from what to what?—to these men who have not shown in Opposition any great capacity for Government?—and I am not saying anything unkind. I want to present facts and arguments, not criticism. The Legislature passed during my administration 610 bills, of which 220 were public bills and 390 were private bills. I want you to look over the records of the House and see how much of that large volume of legislation is to be credited to the Opposition. You judge trees by their fruit. They have the same opportunities as we have in public questions except those affecting the revenue. Look over the 220 public bills, you will not find perhaps in all the legislation one on the statute book covered by these bills more than two or three pages which properly belong to the constructive work of the Opposition. The Opposition at Ottawa under Edward Blake and Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the Opposition at Toronto under Sir William Meredith had some constructive power. But the Opposition in Ontario have fallen on days of sterility, and yet they asked that the Government be put out of office. I am not reflecting on them personally; I am speaking of them as public men, as to their capacity to legislate usefully or efficiently for the Province of Ontario.

"It is Time For a Change."

Now, it is easy for a Conservative to run up to Mr. Madole and say, "It is time for a change." If Conservatives were in power would they say so? We said so in 1896. The Conservatives had been in power at Ottawa for eighteen years; we said then it was time for a change, and we proved it. (Applause.) What was the position of the Government at Ottawa? Sir Hector Langevin had been practically forced to retire from his seat in the Government because of his connection with contract scandals. Mr. McGreevy was sent to the common jail because he had dabbled as a member of Parliament in contracts; Sir Adolphe Caron admitted he had spent \$20,000 on the elections in Quebec, and that he would do it again, and there was the Curran bridge scandal, and scandals of so many kinds which proved that the Administration then in power had forfeited its rights to the confidence of the people. (Mr. Ross also referred to the bolt of the seven members of Sir Mackenzie Bowell's Cabinet, and, amid cheers, pointed out that there were no such scandals in connection with his Government, nor were there such internal intrigues as existed in the Conservative party.) Members of the Government must be loyal to each other. If they are not how can they be loyal to the country? Our Administration has not been connected with any political immorality in the last thirty-four years. There are what are called "election scandals," to which I will refer presently.

An Honest Government.

I want this note to go to the country—that every member of the Liberal Administration, that has been in power since 1871, is able to stand before the most critical court in the land, before any committee of the House. As I have often done in days gone by, I challenge our opponents to show that the Administration has been corrupt, that we have traded in our positions for political support, that we have bartered public contracts for election funds, or that we have done anything that will bring a feeling of shame to the most sensitive conscience. That is our challenge to the country to-day. (Loud cheers.) We say that after 34 years' service it is a challenge you will admit that I can make with some pride. So that when we said in 1896 it was time for a change we made out a case. There is no case made out in the present instance. (Cheers.)

Mr. Whitney's Obstruction.

More than that, while Mr. Whitney had not been constructive he had in many cases been obstructive, and that was about as useless a function as an Opposition could discharge. As illustrations of this fact, Mr. Ross said that when an asylum was wanted at Brockville to accommodate the lunatics who were confined in the jails, a project towards which one would have thought his humane instincts would have responded, the Government carried it in face of a resolution negating it. Mr. Whitney opposed the erection of a normal school at London, in face of his utterances with regard to education, and when the Government proposed to appoint an officer to look after the children of indigent and degraded homes in our cities, a work that appealed, he ventured to say, to the heart of every man present, Mr. Whitney opposed it. As a result of that legislation 1,200 children had been placed in foster homes in Ontario, where they are cared for as carefully as if they were the natural born children of the people with whom they reside. Mr. Whitney also opposed the proposal to appoint a municipal auditor to protect the municipalities from defalcation of their officers, and when the Government proposed to establish a farm near Port Arthur to demonstrate the suitability of the soil and climate of that portion of Ontario to agriculture, Mr. Whitney opposed it.

Good Measures Opposed.

The Government had wanted to develop or increase the knowledge of the fruit-growers of Ontario, who were engaged in a very important industry, with exports of a million barrels of apples last year, but when they wanted to train the farmers in spraying, Mr. Whitney was opposed to it. Similarly he had opposed the appointment of a clerk of forestry, who was desired to assist in the care of our great heritage of \$125,000,000 of pine and hardwood, which yields the Province \$1,250,000 to \$1,500,000 a year, and give us a perpetual harvest therefrom. He had many similar resolutions, which showed

how short-sighted the Opposition were and how they failed to rise to the needs of the Province. Did they want to put in the place of the present Government men who were so nearsighted that they would not protect our forests or fruit trees? Men who opposed even the appointment of a Minister of Agriculture or of an officer to take charge of indigent children? "Would it be wise," asked Mr. Ross, "for you to take men with these narrow views of these great questions and place them where, unless their views broadened when they got into power, this country would come to a standstill? I am not going to say they would be corrupt in power—that is not for me to say, for I do not know what they would be in power. I have not much confidence in them in that respect in Opposition. When the Government dealt with the great industries at the Soo they were met by Mr. Whitney's opposition. The Government had been endeavoring to make Canada independent of the United States Steel Trust, independent of the furnaces of Belgium, Germany and France, and for that matter independent of the furnaces of Great Britain, in the manufacture of structural iron and railway steel."

Millions for Our Own Producers.

"Think of the magnitude of that proposition!" the Premier exclaimed. "We require 100,000 tons of steel rails every year to keep up with the ordinary wear and tear and waste and betterment on our railways. Thirty-two million dollars of Canadian money leaves this country every year for iron and manufactures of iron. We have bodies of iron ore to the north of us equal to the best in the Mesaba range in Minnesota. This little Legislature in Ontario set itself deliberately to work to proclaim the emancipation of Canada from foreign steel furnaces and the great steel trust of the United States. (Cheers.) I am proud, ladies and gentlemen, of every step we took upon that very troublesome and tedious highway. We look over Canada from Prince Edward Island to the Pacific coast, and we want to see that the Canadian laboring man and the Canadian Manufacturer and the Canadian producer are all kept at work, and that the by-products obtained in the industries of these great factories shall be available to Canadian workmen on Canadian soil to build up the industries of the Province of Ontario. That is what we say." (Applause.)

The Soo Industries.

The Soo Industries, Mr. Ross continued, fell into difficulties. The stock speculators in the United States practically impoverished some of the men who were at the back of the industries. They had invested \$33,000,000 in plant of various kinds. The turn had been reached where, if the Government did not assist the industries, the steel trust of the United States, that practically had a mortgage on the whole property would close those industries. "We were not going to bend the knee to the Americans," said he, "in allowing the interests of the

Province of Ontario to be sacrificed by the millionaires of Wall street. We said to the Legislative Assembly: 'We will endorse the bonds of this concern to the extent of \$2,000,000 on everything they owned. They will pay the interest and redeem the bonds in two years.'" Proceeding, Mr. Ross said this action, taken in spite of the Opposition, had resulted in reviving the Soo industries; 4,000 men in round numbers were being employed, and \$130,000 a month, or \$1,500,000 a year was being paid in wages. These men were being fed and supplied from older Ontario, were getting pork, bacon, wheat and flour, and the produce of the dairy from Lennox among the other older counties.

The first six months' interest on the bonds guaranteed by the Government, \$50,000, and on the mortgage bonds, \$250,000 had been paid when the money recently fell due. Nearly all the creditors, 1,800 in all, had been paid a sum of \$2,700,000. About twenty-five or thirty thousand dollars yet remained to be paid, and he believed this would be paid before the beginning of the new year. (He spoke of the large contracts given by the Canadian Pacific, the Intercolonial and the Temiskaming Railways as proof of the prosperity and bright future of the Soo works, and incidentally referred to the legislation providing that no one should be employed on works aided by the Government who came from countries where there is an alien law against Canadians.)

The Temiskaming Railway.

A passing notice was also paid by the Premier to the Temiskaming Railway. The two things, the aid to the Soo and the building of the Temiskaming Railway, were large propositions, but this was a great country, and he did not want to belong to any Government that would not catch the keynote of Canadian sentiment, and which would hesitate to put themselves boldly and resolutely to the making of Ontario the premier Province of the Dominion. (Applause.) Mr. Whitney would not have them do anything large. He would cry "stop," but the Government would advance, leaving the Opposition leader to look at the procession as it wound around the hill.

No Corruption Proved.

"They say," the Premier continued, "that the Government are corrupt and ought to go out, but up to this moment they have not proved any corruption against the Government. (Applause.) There has been some corruption by Liberals here and there, and the Conservatives are attempting to hold the Government responsible for those things." That was a hard position, he said, to be put in. There were 220,000 Liberal voters in Ontario, and was he to be held responsible for what every one did? Would they hold Dr. Carman, General Superintendent of the Methodist Church, responsible for the acts of a few members of the Church who went to the theatre or played cards? Or would they hold the head of the Presbyterian Church responsible for all the

weaknesses of the Church members about Christmas or New Year's time! (Laughter and cries of "No, no.") Would they hold Sir Wilfrid Laurier responsible for the trick ballot-boxes in West Hastings or Frontenac? Would they hold Mr. Whitney responsible for the men in the Conservative ranks that had been proved guilty of corruption? Mr. Whitney did not want to be held responsible for them, but, strange to say, he wanted the Liberal leaders to be held responsible for the offences of a few Liberals. With regret he admitted that some members of the Liberal party had been guilty of corruption. The great Liberal convention in Toronto had put itself indisputably on record as to what it thought of the corrupt practices in the Liberal ranks, but the Conservative conference was as silent as a mermaid in regard to corrupt practices in its own ranks. (Applause).

Sinned and are Sorry.

Mr. Ross continued: We have sinned, we are sorry for it, we have repented. The others have sinned—sinned abundantly—and have not yet brought forth fruits meet for repentance. (Cheers.) I want also to say, by way of confession, that some of those who have been associated with the irregularities in the Liberal ranks are entire strangers to me. (Cheers.) For instance, Capt. John Sullivan—Sullivan?—never saw him. Frank Sullivan—saw him once two months ago at a distance. I was told so and so was Frank Sullivan—never saw his face. Robert Sutherland concerned at the Soo—never saw him.

Go over the whole list of the Liberals that have been reported for corrupt practices, and I think I can say truthfully that I have never seen them and have no personal acquaintance with them. Not a man ever went on a corrupt mission with any authority from me or from the Liberal party or the Liberal Government, and, as far as I know, none of them ever went on a corrupt mission from the Liberal Association of the Province. (Cheers.) They may have been asked by local associations to act, as to that I cannot say. What I say is true; I don't know them personally; they had no authority to canvass from us, and certainly never any authority from me to canvass corruptly; and what I say of myself is true of all the members of the Government. It is grossly, cruelly untrue—(cheers)—and false that I have any guilty knowledge of the practices of these men. (Cheers.) I have had ten contests in my own constituency. I have been 34 years in public life, and when I retire I want to leave to my children a name that is unsullied. (Cheers.) There have been corrupt practices by some Liberals who ought to have known better. When I say that of some of our people I want to make this point: If you are going to change the Liberal Government because they are corrupt, who are you going to put into their places? If you change us because we are corrupt, and you think so, pick out men on whose garments there is no smell of fire. (Cheers.) Do not pick out men whose record does not show that they are even as pure, so far as the election courts show, as the Liberal party has been. Since Confederation there have been 36 Liberals unseated

and 40 Conservatives. An enumeration of statistics does not, however, prove the case, but still it has some meaning. It means that we were bad or 36 of our men would not have been unseated, but they want to put us out and put in our places the party in whose ranks 40 corrupt men were found. Is that common sense? ("No.")

(Mr. Ross proceeded to work out the proportion of those unseated to the number elected, with the result that the records show that only 5 per cent. of the Liberals elected have been unseated as compared with 10 per cent. of the Conservatives.)

Tories are the Worst.

"We are bad, the election courts say so; I admit it with sorrow. But the others are worse. If you turn us out you put more corrupt men in our places. Is that the way to purify the body politic? If we are bad, turn us out, but do not let the cure be worse than the disease—for scarlatina do not substitute smallpox, for typhoid fever do not introduce leprosy. Let there be some sanity in the remedy. (Cheers and laughter.)

Mr. Ross, referring to his one campaign as Premier, as a reply to the cry of corruption, pointed to the record. There were 12,000 election officials and 427,000 ballots cast, and the record showed that not a single ballot was defaced, not a single ballot-box was tampered with, not a single official disgraced himself in the slightest particular. "I am proud of the record," he said, amid cheers, "and yet I am the corrupt man who is degrading the electorate. If I wanted to make reprisals, oh, how easy." Mr. Ross recited the incidents in connection with the North Ontario election, where the ballot-boxes were opened at night and 21 ballots for Mr. Graham were taken out and a like number marked for his opponent substituted. In South Grey six ballot-boxes were opened at six different polling places and 26 ballots for the Conservative candidate substituted for Liberal ballots. There was no record of how the Conservatives would have behaved in Ontario; for 32 years they had not the chance, because the Liberals had the ballot-boxes, but the world knew what they did when they had the chance in the Dominion elections. There were four ballots in North Grey about which there had been some comment, but Judge MacLennan of the High Court here reported there was no ground for suspicion that they had been tampered with, so there was a clean bill of health in regard to that election.

That was not all. There had been fourteen re-counts when 62,805 ballots had been examined by the Conservative lawyers in the presence of the Judge in the fierce light that beats upon an election court. Not one had been found to have been tampered with. Now, as to bribery of electors, that had been done by both parties, to their shame. As a result of the last election seven Conservatives and one Liberal had been reported for corrupt practices. The Conservatives were seven times as bad as the Liberals. (Laughter.) In South Ontario Wm.

Smith had admitted spending \$1,200 in bribery to defeat Mr. Dryden. Had the leader of the Opposition disowned him? No, he had afterwards run as Conservative candidate, and they had almost elected him.

Conservative Purity Fund.

Mr. Ross then reviewed the history of the "purity fund" of the Conservative party as disclosed by *The Toronto News* of November 14, 1903. A fund of \$19,673 had been raised for Ontario in the Dominion election of 1900, and it had all been expended but \$1,950. "Strange to say," observed the Premier, "they had a surplus. I suppose they kept it in an old trunk." (Laughter.) The result of the work of that little committee of electoral purifiers and fumigators and disinfectors had been a Conservative majority of twenty in Ontario. How many were prepared to say that fund had been honestly and properly spent? (Hear, hear.) When the Provincial campaign of 1902 came on Mr. Whitney met those gentlemen and asked them to take charge of his campaign fund, and they had done so. The sum of \$28,895 was raised, as they had a bigger contract on hand that time. (Laughter.) They had spent \$4,633 for detectives—American detectives, our own would not do—and when some of them that had been in Lennox were wanted to give evidence in the election court they fled to the other side out of reach. Fancy the leader of the Opposition meeting that committee of purifiers, sitting with the lights turned down, with \$28,000 in gold or Canadian currency piled before them! (Hear, hear.) They had heard of that fund all over the Province. Five hundred dollars of it had come into Lennox, \$500 went into North Norfolk, \$2,000 to the Soo, \$1,200 to Muskoka, and had there not been so many petitions abandoned there is no doubt a good deal more would have been found.

He did not say that Mr. Whitney was politically corrupt, but he wanted to hold him responsible for the disposition of that fund until he could completely vindicate himself, say where every dollar of it went and that every dollar of it was honestly and properly spent. (Applause.)

Ballot-box Stuffing.

He challenged Mr. Whitney to place his hands on a single ballot-box that had been stuffed by a deputy returning officer under a Liberal Administration. The leader of the Opposition would no doubt refer to one in North Waterloo, in which there were found nineteen ballots mismarked, but on examination before a Police Magistrate, with a Tory Crown Attorney, the deputy returning officer had been vindicated. How the ballots got there was not shown, but apart from that case there was not a single suspicion of ballot-stuffing in any constituency. He asked the Conservatives to put their finger upon a polling subdivision where there was any ballot-switching. They would refer to West Elgin, and quote Pritchett's evidence that nineteen ballots

had been switched, whereas the Liberal and Tory scrutineers at that polling place had sworn that it had not and could not have been done. The Premier would rather take the word of those scrutineers than that of a man who, according to the Judge, was a self-convicted liar. (Applause.) It would also be said there had been gross frauds in West Elgin, because four men who had no authority to do so got possession of the ballot-boxes. He was afraid these men intended fraud, but the evidence of 211 witnesses examined before the commission which investigated the matter showed that in no case did they commit fraud. Then, again, it was said that ballots were burned. On this point the Premier pointed out that the law calls for the destruction of ballots by burning a year after they have been cast at the election. Inadvertently the officers charged with that duty had burned the ballots of the West Elgin bye-election, held in January, 1899, with the ballots of the general election of 1898. The Judges, after the closest examination of the men concerned—they were all known to be honorable—completely vindicated the honesty of that unfortunate destruction, and said the ballots were inadvertently burned. Mr. Ross was sorry, because if he wanted to retaliate he could refer to the city of Winnipeg, where, in 1896, under the Conservative regime, 10,000 extra ballots were printed and used, and at 4 o'clock the polls were closed, in order that more might be printed.

Prosecution Obstructed.

Mr. Ross then explained at length the legal obstacles which prevented the Government from prosecuting Pritchett and which were created by the action of the Conservatives. The warrant in the case being in the hands of Conservative solicitors, the Government could not proceed. The Government could not prosecute him for forgery, because the election law did not cover the particular offence, although it has since been amended, and he could not be prosecuted for perjury because the affidavit was made in Michigan. All these circumstances had the appearance of premeditation. When Mr. Wright, the Conservative organizer, wanted to get two of his "beauties" into North York to destroy the good name of the Commissioner of Crown Lands, he got them over from Buffalo. When they wanted to get affidavits in connection with the Minnie M. from Patrick Calvin they went to the American side of the river, so that the Government could not get at him. Was there design in these incidents? If Pritchett was to be prosecuted the Conservatives only could take the proceedings. There have been 277 persons reported for corrupt practices since confederation—not a great many, and yet too many. Under Sir Oliver Mowat none were prosecuted. Under Mr. Hardy none were prosecuted. Since the last bye-elections what had he done? Summonses have been issued against every one reported guilty of corrupt practices—one in North Norfolk and three in Muskoka. As for the Soo, the Government had not issued summonses against

them because a private prosecutor, anxious either to get half the penalties or else to furnish the Conservative party with a little kudos, or anxious to forestall the Government, had gone to the Judges at Osgoode Hall, once or oftener, had even gone before the time was up at which summonses could issue, to apply for summonses. As soon as the time was up the Attorney-General made inquiry and found that the summonses had already been issued. When the private prosecutor applied for funds to carry on the case, the Attorney-General replied that, having taken the case out of his hands, he could go on and prosecute himself, but that he would give instructions to the County Crown Attorney to prosecute, who, having been concerned in the election, failed to act, and Judge Osler said he was quite right in doing so. Mr. Watson, K.C., had acted for the defence; he did so on his own responsibility. He did not mention this to reflect upon his predecessors, but merely to quote the facts. When did the prosecutions begin? Only when he got into office. He had not been there a year and a half when 47 of these offenders, Liberals as well as Conservatives, and he believed more Liberals than Conservatives, were tried for corrupt practices and fined from \$200 to \$800 each, and some of them went to the common jail. He only did his duty in this. The Soo case stood for trial on January 24, when two Judges could be got to try it. The Conservatives had bungled the case in their haste to get election powder. Since he had been Premier the Government had prosecuted 17 men for election offences, and summonses were out for four others who would be tried in January, making 51 in all. The Conservative party at Toronto or Ottawa had never yet prosecuted anyone for corrupt practices. As well might Mr. Whitney be held responsible for the four corrupt practices at the Soo as that he should be held responsible for that done by the Liberals. Mr. Miscampbell, the present Conservative organizer, had committed three personal offences against the election law, and, came within an ace of being disqualified. He had paid money in three different cases to men to come in and organize. "You wonder," said the Premier, "that our choler rises with indignation sometimes when we speak of these horrid, vile, base charges that are as foundationless as the dreams of the night."

The Minnie M. Voyage.

Mr. Ross spoke of the Minnie M. and observed that as Mr. Miscampbell had been the commodore of Clergue's fleet of eighteen vessels, the Minnie M.'s full name must have been Minnie Miscampbell. (Laughter.) He deplored the exploit of the personators, and pointed out that the Conservatives had planned a similar expedition on the Ruth, but it had been stopped because she was a tug and not licensed to carry passengers. The Minnie M. could not be stopped because she was sailing from an American port. The Attorney-General, it was claimed, had information given him regarding her intention to sail, in the shape of a letter which was read at a public meeting. His answer

was that he was not a policeman, but he took pains to warn the people against committing breaches of the election law. If the Attorney-General had believed that the story was true, and if it had been in his power to stop the Minnie M., and he had not done so, he would have been recreant to his trust. The Premier emphatically and unequivocally denied all knowledge of the Minnie M. and the men concerned in her trip prior to the time the story was published in the papers, when the evidence was given in the election court. Within recent years, the Premier continued, the Conservatives had been guilty of personation in West Elgin and North Perth. Two blacks did not make a white; Conservative offences did not mitigate Liberals' wrongdoing. The Tory cry was that the Government ought to be dismissed. His argument was that the election courts show that Tories were guilty of twice as many frauds upon electors as the Liberals were. (Applause.)

The Brawling Brood.

In 1884, before he had been many weeks in the Legislature, an American, in conference with some Conservatives in the city of Toronto, had proposed to bribe some members of the Legislature to get a certain timber policy adopted, and had paid \$1,500 into the hands of Mr. Balfour, afterwards Speaker of the House, who had brought the plot to light. Mr. Fraser characterized the plotters as "the brawling brood of bribers." (Applause.) The then manager of *The Mail* was concerned in that plot; it was hatched out under the eaves of *The Mail* office, and yet if Ananias was regenerated it would be found he was outdone in the perfervid language in the columns of *The Mail* that now denounced the Liberals. (Laughter and applause.) Then in Montreal recently what was the conspiracy with which the names of Mr. Blair, Mr. Graham and others had been mentioned?

The Premier indignantly repudiated the insinuation that he was a party to the trick ballot-box plot in Hastings and Frontenac. They might as well charge him with the assassination of Lincoln, Garfield and McKinley, or allege that he had been guilty of firing a shot at the Governor-General. "I want to say to the Opposition in this campaign," said the Premier, "that no language of mine will be spared to expose the arrant hypocrisy of the men who claim a right to attain to the Government benches on the ground of electoral purity. They have no ground at all for such a claim. They produce nothing in the way of legislation; they are not a constructive party; they are not in sympathy with progressive Ontario."

The Conservative Conference.

Sir John Macdonald had weaknesses, but he was a large man, with a large view of affairs; so with Sir Charles Tupper. If the Conservatives had met in Toronto as the Liberals did they would have formulated a policy. They had a conference, and invited all classes to attend; they invited Liberals; they thought they were going to rope

in with a drag net old Liberals. No Liberals went there, not one. (Cheers.) They said Lockie Wilson was there, but he has been Conservative oftener than Liberal; there was also a man from Oxford, who, though Liberal in Dominion politics, is not so in Provincial matters. They invited the preachers, but there was not one came in; it was not the place for preachers, and they knew it. (Laughter.) There were five of them at the Liberal convention. This conference adopted what was called a policy. Mr. Ross reviewed the planks in that policy in detail. The first was, "We want Whitney in." The second was, "We approve Mr. Whitney's speech at the conference, and his record as shown by the journals." He had shown what the record was they approved of. The next plank was, "We want a mining office in each mining district." This was stolen goods: the Government had already established three offices. The next, "The settler shall have all the minerals and timber." Stolen also: the Liberal convention had previously adopted this policy. Then they were in favor of public ownership, also stolen; the Liberals have been in favor of public ownership fifty years. The next, "No coalition," he would deal with later on. They favored "agricultural bulletins in public schools," forgetting that the Government ten years ago authorized agricultural text books for the public schools, which last year were studied by 45,000 children. "That the rate of interest on drainage loans be the same as the Province pays," already the policy of the Government. "Labelling prison-made goods." The Government had stopped manufacture of goods to enter into competition with free labor. The temperance plank of the Conservatives Mr. Ross described as "colorless as a white ray of light, and not so pure," which meant nothing. He pointed out that Mr. Whitney's talk of a reduction of licenses was indefinite, as he did not say to what extent he would reduce them. In reply to the demand for better enforcement of the liquor law, as an evidence of the vigor of enforcement, Mr. Ross pointed out that \$20,000 were collected in fines against \$11,000 three years ago. He pointed out that under Mr. Whitney's proposal for non-political license commissioners two out of the three would be political appointments. "I am thankful to have been able to make this defence; nay, it is not a defence in the strict sense of the term; it is an attack upon the position of our opponents. We are breaking in their lines at every point, left, right and centre. Their charges have been found to be foundationless. Let Mr. Whitney answer them in detail, not in air, hot or cold, not in strong language, but let them be answered as before the tribunal of the great assize of 430,000 able-bodied men, independent electors of the Province." Mr. Ross referred to the coincidence of the election occurring on the birthday of Robert Burns.

In concluding, Mr. Ross observed that it was true the Government's course in some cases was misrepresented. Nothing had been too severe to say of Sir Oliver Mowat. "I would like to get some bouquets while I am still with you." (Applause.) They say I am

the grand old man. I am not an old man. I will be by-and-by, I hope, but if I be, I want to look back upon prosperous Canada, upon a free people, upon electoral purity, and upon domestic virtue. I am willing to be misrepresented now if, peradventure, the truth will come a little later."

The Course of Government.

What does a great English writer say about a statesman? and with that I close. Bolingbroke wrote long ago as follows:—"The ocean which environs us is an emblem of our Government, and the pilot and the Ministers are in similar circumstances. It seldom happens that either of them can steer a direct course, and they both arrive at their port by means which frequently seem to carry them from it. But as the work advances the conduct of him who leads it on with real abilities clears up, the appearing inconsistencies are reconciled, and when it is once consummated the whole shows itself so uniform, so plain, so natural, that every dabbler in politics will be apt to think that he could have done it the same. That is where we expect our reward."

The Premier added:—"The dabbler now sees nothing but weakness. When the structure is complete and it stands before us as to the purpose for which it is intended, then those who criticized us will recognise us hereafter, and this land of ours will have enjoyed at our hands the blessings of good government." (Loud cheers.)

The meeting closed at 10.35 with loud cheers for the King, Premier Ross and Mr. Madole.